(b) if so, what are the details of the steps taken to improve the performance of the non-ferrous metal industry in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF MINES (SHRIMATI RAM DULARI SINHA): (a) and (b) From time to time the Government have taken steps in accordance with the prescribed policies to review the situation in the non-ferrous metal industry both in the public and private sectors and to ensure its viability. Several specific measures have been taken in fields of aluminium, copper and zinc industries.

As regards aluminium industry, the four major aluminium producing units in the country namely Bharat Aluminium Company, a public sector undertaking of Government of India, and Hindustan Aluminium Company, Indian Aluminium Company and Madras Aluminium Company in the private sector reached a production level of 2,77,000 tonnes as against the installed capacity of 3,62,000 tonnes. This production level is being stepped up during the current year and with commencement of production in the public sector unit of Government of India under construction namely National Aluminium Company, the country is likely to have surplus production during the Seventh Plan period. A Development Council has been constituted to give impetus to the uses of aluminium. A high power action group on promotion of aluminium in the transport sector has also been constituted to examine the technical as well as fiscal measures required. Recently, the World Aluminium Congress, INCAL 1985, was held in New Delhi to create greater awareness of the latest technologies in the production and uses of primary aluminium and its downstream products.

As regards copper, produced by M/s. Hindustan Copper Ltd., a public sector undertaking of Government of India, a committee has been set up to restructure the capital base of the company and steps have been initiated both at the Indian Copper Complex, Ghatsila and Khetri Copper Complex, Khetri to modernize the smelter and the refinery. The central excise duty on indigenously manufactured copper pipes and tubes mostly in the private sector was reduced from 30 per cent *ad valorem* to 9 per cent in September, 1984 to make them more competitive compared to imported tubes. This has led to an increase in production expected to be about 50 per cent compared to the previous year.

In the zinc sector the performance of the Hindustan Zinc Ltd., a public sector undertaking of Government of India, is reviewed from time to time and necessary steps taken to help the Company to overcome problems affecting production. In the private sector Cominco Binani Zinc Ltd., has been producing below its licensed capacity. The company has taken up a scheme of modernisation of its smelter in order to achieve the licensed capacity.

**Involvement of STC in payment of 'Speed money'**

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SHRI VIRENDRA VERMA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the involvement of the State Trading Corporation in the payment of 'Speed money' to those persons who are handling imported sugar at Madras Port to ensure quick movement of sugar; and

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) and (b) STC is not paying any 'Speed money' for handling imported sugar at Madras Port to any one.